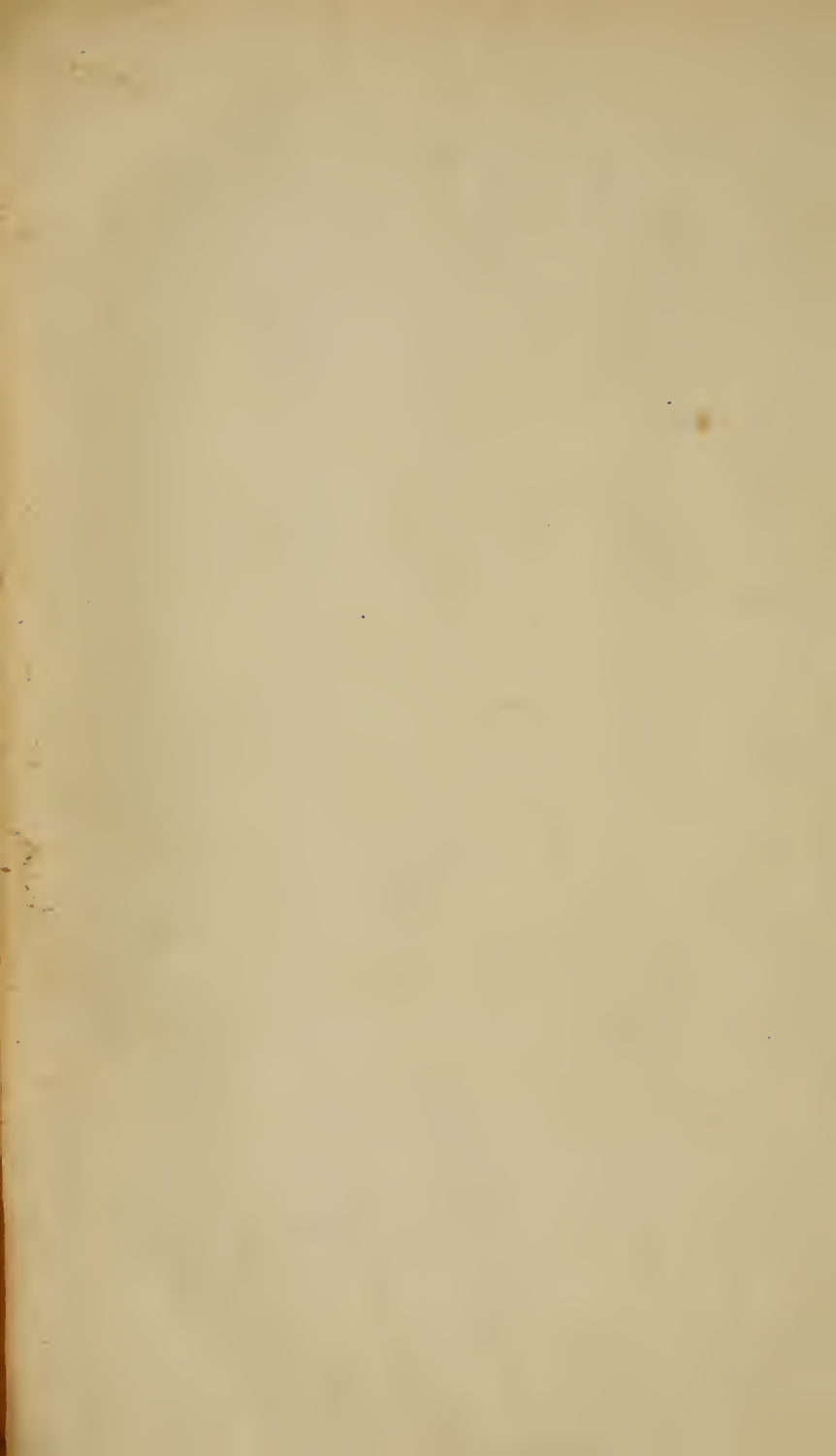




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John G. Talbot

Christ the Healer.

*Leonard's.
Mar. 9. 1856 -*

A SERMON

PREACHED BY

THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD,

ON THE

OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDINGS

OF THE

HOUSE OF MERCY, CLEWER,

VIGIL OF S. ANDREW, NOVEMBER 29, 1855.

AND

PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE ORDER OF SERVICE USED ON THE OCCASION, AND AN ACCOUNT
OF THE CEREMONY AND OF THE NEW BUILDINGS.

LONDON :

JOSEPH MASTERS, ALDERSGATE STREET,
AND NEW BOND STREET.

MDCCCLVI.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY JOSEPH MASTERS AND CO.,
ALDERSGATE STREET.

A SERMON.

S. LUKE v. 12, 13.

“AND IT CAME TO PASS, WHEN HE WAS IN A CERTAIN CITY, BEHOLD A MAN FULL OF LEPROSY: WHO SEEING JESUS FELL ON HIS FACE, AND BESOUGHT HIM, SAYING, LORD, IF THOU WILT, THOU CANST MAKE ME CLEAN. AND HE PUT FORTH HIS HAND, AND TOUCHED HIM, SAYING, I WILL, BE THOU CLEAN. AND IMMEDIATELY THE LEPROSY DEPARTED FROM HIM.”

IN common with all the other miraculous works of mercy wrought by our LORD, this cleansing of the leper shows Him forth as the true Healer of man. But whilst, in common with all the other instances in which He healed all manner of sicknesses and diseases among the people, it teaches us this lesson, yet there are about it some peculiar characters which make it more than any other display Him as the true Healer of those special injuries of sin with which to-day we are peculiarly concerned. For though all the evils and infirmities which affect the bodies of men are the fruit of sin, and so are in truth visible exponents of that deep invisible wound in man's nature, from which, as from some central fountain-head of corruption, evil flows through the whole body; yet, in many respects, this mysterious disease of the leprosy does more than any other represent, in outward charac-

ters, the inward curse of sin: and in our LORD's treatment, therefore, of the leper more than of any other sufferer, we shall find instruction as to His merciful mode of dealing with sinners, in the work of their recovery.

All the enactments, indeed, of the Law of Moses concerning leprosy seem to have been appointed by GOD, in order to stamp upon it this mystical character. This purpose will account for that separation of the leper from the touch or company of his friends and relations, which is so alien to the general character of humanity and kindness which marks the provisions of the Jewish law. This is the solution of his being shut out of the congregation and the services of the sanctuary, though there was nothing infectious in his disease, and his separation could not, therefore, be required in order to protect others from any physical evil he could communicate to them. This accounts for his ever bearing about with him in his sickness the tokens of extremest mourning, as of one weeping for his dead, and for his needing, if restored, the same purification as one who by the touch of a dead body had incurred a legal impurity.

In studying, therefore, our LORD's treatment of the leprous man whom He made whole, we are studying, as in some great acted parable, His treatment of the sinner, who is receiving moral and spiritual renovation from Him. And here, first, we may see of these, as of His other works of mercy, that He did not scatter them with an undiscerning prodigality around Him, but gave them to those who had yielded themselves to be drawn to Him by the secret breathings of His SPIRIT, and who came to seek their deliverance from Him. For that mysterious limitation to His working,

which was imposed by man's unfaithfulness, that "He could there do no mighty works because of their unbelief," may be traced here also.

But with this we should notice next, that there was about His treatment of the leper who did seek to Him for cleansing, a manifest character of Almighty power. For, by the confession of all, there was for this fearful malady no human cure, and He asserted over it, in all its forms, an absolute dominion.

This poor sufferer manifestly came before Him as one suffering from its extremest virulence. He was a man "*full of leprosy*," words which speak of the entire possession of its victim which that frightful disorder asserted, and yet language cannot contain a more absolute expression of power than that conveyed by the whole narrative, "I will, be thou clean. And He touched him: and immediately the leprosy departed from him."

These words of power, moreover, "I WILL, be thou clean," suggest to us the further truth, that it was *His Will* that the sufferer should be healed. For this was his appeal, "LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean;" and our LORD's reply, "I will," must not by any means be limited to the needs of that single sufferer, but extended rather to embrace every one who should in like manner come to *Him* for healing. They are the expression of a will for *man's* healing; "THOU hast appealed," they seem to say, to Me, to show forth in THEE whether it is My Will that man should burst these unrighteous bonds of the dark prison-house into which he has been dragged, and I tell thee that it is My will—I will that THOU, and every one of My suffering brethren who come to Me for deliverance, should be set free; and to

show thee what My Will is, I say unto thee, "Be thou clean."

Further we must notice another feature, common, indeed, to all His works of mercy, but which comes out here with peculiar clearness, namely, that in working the deliverance of the leper from the evil which oppresses him, He draws the sufferer to Himself, as being the very fountain-head of his cure. For thus He manifests that He is not the mere administrator of great and merciful powers entrusted to Him in measure by another. He is not like Prophets under the Law, and Apostles under the Gospel. He does not work His miracles with the rod of God, nor in the name of another. He does not act as one trusted by another with a commission which involved the possession of authority in the name of that other to overrule the ordinary laws which He had laid down, and so by the bringing in of the authority of their Master subdue the powers of nature; but He draws the sufferer for healing to *Himself*, and from Himself, the living Fountain of renewal, well out and overflow the blessed influences of restoration.

Thus, when He grants the prayer of this leper, He not only says, "I will, be thou clean;" but He reaches forth His hand and touches him, to convey manifestly by that touch the cleansing which He promised. And this is the more to be noted, because it is one of the few instances in which—and always for some special purpose—He set aside those rules of the Ceremonial Law, to which He too, Who came "to fulfil the Law," as a Son of Abraham, was subject. For this touch of the leper was forbidden to the Jew; and the disregard of the prohibition, made thus more clear and remarkable the fact, that by that

touch He conveyed to the leprous man the cleansing which he needed. At the same time it also brought out another mighty truth, for it was, in *fact*, an assertion that He alone of all men was incapable of being tainted by the touch of evil; that though to heal the leper He touched the leprous flesh, there was conveyed from it to Him no shadow of impurity.

Here, then, in a great outward manifestation, is the work of CHRIST in the cleansing of the sinner. For, first, though it is undeniably true, that all His gifts of grace are not limited by this law, since in Holy Baptism He bestows the grace of Regeneration on those who know not how to seek it; and in all those preliminary visitations wherewith His SPIRIT breathes over the dark waters of the unconverted soul, inviting it to Him, He works as a supreme Sovereign, and giveth to us no account of the laws whereby the bestowing of His blessings is guided; yet in the accomplishment within any soul of the work of penitence it is ever true, as in the case of the cleansed leper, that it is in those alone whom by His secret grace He draws to seek it earnestly, that His sanctifying work is wrought in its perfection: and next, although even His Almighty power is so far restrained by the mysterious malignity of sin, that He, Whose Love yearns over every soul for whom He died with a longing energy for its cleansing, says to one and another, even with the Infinite compassion wherewith He wept over Jerusalem, "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life;" yet is it certain, that no amount of sin, no deep enmity of the soul with its impurity, can withhold from those who do seek for His working, the fulness of His cleansing. For

that in them He worketh mightily, "according to the good pleasure of His Will."

And again, though in the marvel of our salvation, it is true that an obdurate will which refuses His mercy does force from Him its destruction, yet it is also true, and a most blessed truth, beloved brethren, to every one of us, that He willeth not the death of any one sinner, but that all should be converted and live: that it is CHRIST's will that every one should be saved; and, therefore, in spite of all that our unbelieving fears whisper to us in limitation of His Love or Power, it is an eternal truth, and one full of most needful comfort, not only for every awakening penitent, but for every one of us in every stage of that life-long renewal, which is evermore but a new form of penitence, of a deeper self-abhorrence, of a more earnest, if of a less passionate crying to Him against ourselves, that to every one that seeketh Him, He says, in the person of this leprous man, "I will, that thou be clean." This is My love towards sinners, this My purpose of mercy for thee, this My abundant grace into which more and more THOU shalt enter.

And then further, as He did with this leprous man, so does He with every sinner whom He saves. He draws them to Himself for their cleansing, He is their cleanser; it is in reaching Him that they are cleansed. It is not here as with many of His gifts of royal largess, a gift out of Himself and at best reflecting Him its giver, which He bestows. Here He is His own gift. He gives Himself to the polluted, and that gift is cleansing. In the wonder of the Incarnation, and in giving us for our life that Flesh which He took in the Virgin's womb, and for our cleansing from all sin that Blood which He drew from her, in that mar-

vellous mystery, He reaches with His hand, and in the case of every believing man He even touches the leper, having taken to Himself our fallen flesh and yet being unfallen, our very nature and yet being uncorrupt, yea, altogether untainted by the evil which, that He may utterly remove it, He in His inconceivable mercy brings, in us whom He is rescuing, so close to Himself.

Here then is His work of cleansing the sinner set indeed most vividly before us, in the narrative of His mercy towards the leprous man : and for many reasons it seems to me that this in its simplicity is the very subject on which we should do well to muse to-day, when we meet for the opening of this house, to mark with humble gratitude to God the measure of success which He has already given us ; to seek from Him in prayer its full accomplishment ; to offer for it of our substance, and to stir up ourselves and others to labour more abundantly to bring all that we have purposed here to full and proper completion. For that which we need above all to-day is greater love ; greater love to our brethren and to Him. And where are these to be learned save beneath His Cross ? Where, save in the light of His work for saving souls, shall we learn their value, the loss involved in their destruction, the bliss of their salvation ? By whom save by Him can we be mightily drawn out of our selfishness and isolation, and made indèed to love others ? From whom else can we learn our lesson ? and where else shall we learn His exceeding great love, or learn ourselves in any great measure to love Him, so surely as in the sight of that love wherewith He has loved us, Who gave Himself for our cleansing ? This is indeed that which must fill our hearts, if we would learn to master in any degree the great

secret of true love. "We love Him because He first loved us," is the universal law. Our love *must* be a reflection of His. Our love is His love working in us, and, however imperfectly, given back by us. It is in gazing on His love in healing us that we ourselves come to love. He who knows that much is forgiven him, learns to love much ; and this love will soon begin to embrace others also ; for this love of CHRIST "constraineth us." We all know in the sphere of mere earthly morals how far the mysterious power of sympathetic affection lifts men up above the slower, duller action of mere reasoning ; how by its touch the coward grows brave, and the selfish heroic ; how even the sensualist is often for the time at least transfigured by its heavenly light into something noble. And all this is but the shadow of that greatest verity, the love of CHRIST : of that true, deep, ennobling affection, which makes saints, and confessors, and martyrs : which sees and apprehends something of that love which led the co-eternal SON of the Everlasting to take to Himself our nature ; to reach out His hand to touch us in our low estate and utter impurity, that from Himself He might derive into us perfect purity—which led Him to do all this, and in order to do it to stoop even to the humiliation of the judgment hall, and the agony of Gethsemane, and the Cross of Calvary. Where then at such a season as this, when we would fain learn how more than we have ever done to overcome our selfishness, and to kindle in our hearts some new fire of love to others ; where, or on what, can we more fitly muse than underneath the Cross, and on the work, of CHRIST ?

Nor is even this all ; for in every separate part of this His work of cleansing the leper as it has passed

before us, we may find what we need to make us more hearty and earnest in such works of Christian mercy as that to which this building is dedicated. For where can we find a better answer to that temptation to inaction (known probably by all as troubling them at some time or other) which arises from the thought of the comparative fewness of those whom on the most sanguine calculation we can ever hope to save in this or other such institutions, when viewed beside the multitude, who still remain unsaved, than in the recollection that this is indeed the law of CHRIST's own works of mercy ; that when He was upon earth it was as it were one or two out of the multitude of afflicted whom He could rescue ; one Lazarus raised, but many graves still holding forfeit beloved forms ; one or two recovered from the well nigh universal reign of infirmity, disease and death. And as it was then, so is it still. For though He died for all, yet is it but the few who *will* be saved by Him ; one cleansed out of many lepers ; one rescued out of many lost ones.

And then further, to save us from such a desponding sloth, are we not here reminded, that, as He scatters not His work of healing, but bestows it upon one and on another singly and as it were by a separate gift, even when He has drawn them to seek and thus prepared them to receive it, so we are working most directly in accordance with His plan when we are seeking by the separate training of these lost ones to lead them to Him, and to bring them one by one to see His face of mercy, and to seek His touch of cure ? Or what can help us more to persevere without fainting in our efforts to cleanse these sick souls from the intense and aggravated pollution with which they are

defiled, than the clear light of the great truth which meets us here that He that cleanses such is Almighty ; that no obduracy of evil, no inveteracy of stain can be too hard or too deep for His might ; that He is with us Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean, Who maketh all things new, Who makes the leper's flesh to come again " like the flesh of a little child."

If there be in any one a fainting heart or a feeble hand, let us listen to His voice to-day, and let us hear Him say, "I WILL, Be thou clean," and surely with souls new braced we can turn again with rejoicing confidence to that which, whilst we looked only at its difficulty and our feebleness, seemed to be hopeless toil and labour lost, now that we remember that He is with us, Whose " ear is not deafened that it cannot hear our cry, nor His" Almighty " arm shortened that it cannot save." And what strength is there for us in that answer of "*I will*," to the pleading cry, "LORD, if Thou wilt Thou canst make me clean?" What do we want more than to know what is His will and to work with it ? And here we see beyond all possibility of doubt that this *is* His will,—that He would have these defiled souls brought to seek their cleansing from Him. So that we may plead with Him in prayer, and labour through all the wearisome steps by which we seek to win them to penitence, with a conviction strong enough to secure our perseverance that we are in very deed labouring to carry out His will.

And yet once again ; how plainly do we see here that it is a humble copying of His example when the pure and unfallen reach out their hand to work the cleansing of the fallen and polluted. For here is the touching of the leper. Here is the infinite condescension of the Incarnation itself, with its mysterious joining of our flesh

to God, working thus its proper work in those whom the LORD has called to tread in His footsteps and to copy His example. Yes, to tread in His footsteps and to copy His example ; and yet at how infinite a distance. For surely, after all, it is but by a sort of accommodation of language, that we,—in the full sight of His bowing down His Infinite purity to our impurity, that we,—knowing what the very best and purest of us really are, can ever speak of ourselves as copying His example in stooping to the impure. Yet this is what, in our feeble measure, we do in this work of mercy ; and so we may have confidence in doing it. Nor can the work itself be done if it be not done in this way. I say this with a full conviction of its truth. I say it with no wish to undervalue the service which may have been rendered by paid matrons, or the like, in other older penitentiaries ; but still, with the fullest conviction that God's work cannot thoroughly be done in this subject matter by such a machinery. To do it thoroughly, there *must* be stamped upon the work the distinct character of CHRIST'S Cross ; some manifest token that it is a work of love undertaken for love. It is by such a power as this that in those hearts in which the miserable selfishness of sensual men as much as their own sin has dried up the emotions which belong to purity, and all power of trusting in the unselfish love of others, there must first be opened the first springs of awakening humanity.

It is by this sight of love that their attention is to be gained, and they are to be won to listen to those words which may, through the grace of God, bring true penitence and saving faith unto their souls. So that in their case, with a peculiarity of need which belongs not to that of others, is the sight of true generous Christian love in those who tend them needed, if they

are to be won back to God. They require this more than others, though in all cases of recovering sinners, it is more or less true. For it is the law that His mysterious providence has stamped on this whole dispensation, that it is by the voluntary bowing down of the comparatively unfallen, that the fallen must be lifted up. "Bear ye one another's burden, and so fulfil the law of CHRIST." "To the weak became I as weak that I might gain the weak." "Condescend to men of low estate." "Let this mind be in you, which was also in CHRIST JESUS: Who being in the form of God made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross."¹

Yes, beloved brethren in CHRIST, see again to-day your LORD reaching forth His hand and touching the leper that He may heal him, and follow His example. In doing this you shall glorify Him; in doing this you shall be made an instrument in His hands for saving souls; in doing this you shall find His presence and His strength in your own strife with sin, and following after CHRIST. Most eminently is this true. There is a most blessed provision for the good of our own souls in true work done for CHRIST's sake on behalf of others. Tenderness of spirit; active charity; habitual self-denial; watchfulness; purity; and above all, perhaps, reality in our own religion, are the gifts which God bestows upon us in our working thus His work for our brethren. There is no secondary help which so keeps us from morbid self-contemplation, and from that sickliness of soul which suffers heavenly affection to degenerate into sentimentality. Our con-

¹ Philip. ii. 5—9.

temptation of the very Cross of CHRIST itself is never so real as when having found its blessing for ourselves, we strive simply to bring its virtue and its blessing home to other souls. For those above all, who, being set apart by God's hand from ordinary family duties, find a shelter and room for their religious sympathies in a life spent in common, and furnished with unusual instruments and times for devotion, to labour thus for Him is a safeguard of the first necessity from otherwise inevitable evils. Wide and various experience has ever proved the necessity of such a stream of active service to keep such a society, though founded on the highest motives, from stagnation and so from ultimate corruption.

And this lesson is for all. For those within our walls at whose hands God will mercifully receive the specially acceptable offering of a personal service; for those without these walls, who by prayers for our success join themselves in spirit to our labours, and who by offering of their substance with self-denial for our needs are daily fellow helpers in our work.

And such needs, together with great encouragements, we have—

“We commenced this work suddenly, without any preparation, in a house lent only for six months, trusting to aid, from day to day, and waiting to see whether God would prosper and establish it. In laying the foundations of every work of any magnitude, there is much of the outlay which never appears above ground, and which it would be impossible to state in detail in so brief an account as this. But the main of the expenditure has been as follows :—Two houses have been successively occupied, after the first which was lent, and both these required to be fitted for the purpose, at a considerable cost. A permanent site has been purchased, being a freehold estate of fifteen acres, at a cost of £2,300. The grounds around the house have been fenced, drained, and laid out for recreation; dairy-farm stocked, &c. Lastly, the New Buildings just completed have been

raised at a cost of about £6,800. There has been running on, at the same time, a current expenditure of maintaining a household of about thirty persons, year after year.

“Secondly, as to the living agency for carrying on the work. It was commenced by a single individual, who, for six months and upwards, had no fellow-workers. For the next year and a half, there was only the precarious help of occasional visitors. Gradually a settled community has been formed, and now consists of nine Sisters. They are constituted, according to legally constructed statutes, and by Episcopal sanction, into a corporate body, as a recognised instrument of the work of the Church of God. They support themselves on their own independent means, and carry on the entire management and care of the House with only a few subordinate helpers serving without wages.

“Thirdly, as to the truth and permanence of the principles on which the House has been founded. Its principles were, at the commencement, known only in the appeals of the chief leader of the movement. They have since made such way, that they are now recognised and upheld by a Society which numbered, in the spring of last year, 400 members, including fifteen Bishops, and which extends its operations throughout the entire sphere of the Church of England.

“Lastly, as to the great and momentous object for which these efforts have been made—the success of our endeavours to recover the lost sheep of CHRIST’s fold. The Clergymen and Sisters alike who have here entered upon this work were obliged to do so without any previous experience whatever. The old precedents scarcely applied to what was intended to be carried out in faithful observance of the Church’s system and by a higher kind of service. We have had to form our own views, learn minute details, and test every rule by our own actual experience. There have, therefore, been many deficiencies and errors, which a better knowledge may in part hereafter supply, and a greater success may be hoped to attend our future endeavours. The work has also suffered greatly, up to this time, from the very inconvenient internal arrangement of houses, which only with difficulty were at all made available for the purpose, and where there could be no classification, or even temporary separation for testing the cases admitted. Independently, however, of twenty-two now in the House, out of eighty cases who have left after being for a longer or shorter period under our care, there are fifty believed to be doing well in the world, with a large proportion of whom inter-

course from time to time is kept up. We look on these as the first-fruits of a large harvest of souls, over even one of whom repenting there is joy among the angels of God.

“When it is considered that this progress has been made in the course of six years and a quarter, we may well thank God and take courage. We cannot but recognize His hand blessing the work. The past may well be an encouragement to go on, with the full trust that what has thus been prospered in the beginning, He, in His own time, will complete. May we not venture, therefore, to ask for continued aid, to finish our designs, and launch in its completeness the vessel which we believe to have an eventful mission to accomplish in the generations which are yet to come?”

“Our immediate need is about £1200, to clear all the expenses connected with the Buildings now completed, for necessary extras which have run beyond our contract. We shall still have, in order to complete the design, to build another wing, containing the Sisters’ chief rooms, the department for Penitents of a higher grade, additional Probationary Rooms, the Chapel, and the Infirmary. For this we have already specially appropriated, and therefore not available for our immediate wants, about £1200.”

May we not then, brethren, thank God, and take courage? Has He not deigned, through us again in this work, to reach forth His hand of healing and to say to our spiritual lepers, I will, be thou clean? Let our prayers to Him this day be more earnest than ever; our offerings more simple and more hearty, and may the good LORD deign, for CHRIST’s sake, to forgive us our own manifold infirmities, to heal our own soul’s sicknesses, to bless our imperfect endeavours, and graciously to accept at our hands this our grateful offering of to-day.

ORDER OF SERVICE, ETC.

The Warden, the Subwarden, the Sisters, the Council, and Trustees, shall assemble within the gateway of the New Buildings, ready to receive the Bishop.

The Bishop and Clergy having assembled in the Old House, proceed from thence to the gateway in the following order :—The Choristers go first, then the Clergy, two and two. The Bishop follows, attended by his Chaplains, and any of the Archdeacons of the diocese, or members of the Chapters of Christ Church, Windsor, or Eton, or Rural Deans, who may be present.

As they go, the following Anthem is sung :—

Psalm cxv. 1, and cxlv. 17, 21.

NOT unto us, LORD, not unto us, but to Thy Name give the praise :

For Thou art faithful in all Thy works, and just in all Thy ways.

My mouth shall speak of Thy praise, O LORD, and let all flesh give thanks to Thy Holy Name for ever.

When the Procession reaches the gates, it forms in two lines, between which the Bishop advances, and standing before the gates, says—

In the Name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST.
Amen.

ALMIGHTY and merciful GOD, Who hast conferred such grace on Thy holy Church, that the acts which are done in it according to Thy will, by those who minister duly in Thy Name, are ratified in heaven, we beseech Thee of Thy infinite mercy that what we this day offer may be accepted of Thee ; what we bless, be blessed by Thee, and all our petitions be fulfilled by Thee, for the sake of Thy dear SON, JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

Then the gates being thrown open, the Choristers move within and take their places at the further end of the gateway.

The Bishop crossing the threshold, and there pausing, says—

Peace be to this House, and to all that shall dwell therein. *Amen.*

V. Our help is in the name of the LORD ;

R. Who hath made heaven and earth.

V. LORD, hear our prayer ;

R. And let our cry come unto Thee.

V. The LORD be with you ;

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O LORD Almighty, Who fillest all things by Thy presence, and art ever merciful to those who call upon Thee, we most humbly beseech Thee to bless this House and household, and grant that Thy blessing may abide on all them that shall dwell herein, now and ever, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

The Procession then moves along the passages and up the staircase, to the Temporary Chapel, in the following order :—First the Choristers, then the Council, next to them the Sisters, then the Warden and Subwarden, two and two. The Bishop goes next, attended as before ; the rest of the Clergy following.

As they go, the following Anthem is sung :—

Psalm cxxii. 6, 7, 8, 9.

O PRAY for the peace of Jerusalem ; they shall prosper that love thee.

Peace be within thy walls, and plenteousness within thy palaces.

For my brethren and companions' sakes I will wish thee prosperity.

Yea, because of the house of the LORD our GOD, I will seek to do thee good.

The Procession having entered the Chapel and taken their places, kneeling down, the Priest shall say—

V. LORD, have mercy upon us.

R. CHRIST, have mercy upon us.

V. LORD, have mercy upon us.

O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy cross and precious blood

hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we most humbly beseech Thee, O LORD.

Our FATHER, &c.

V. O LORD, save Thy servants ;

R. Who put their trust in Thee.

V. O LORD, send them help from Thy sanctuary ;

R. And evermore defend them.

V. Show Thy servants the light of Thy countenance ;

R. And save them for Thy mercy's sake.

V. O LORD, hear our prayer ;

R. And let our crying come unto Thee.

Let us pray.

O LORD GOD Almighty, we acknowledge that all things are of Thee, and that it is of Thy mercies only that Thy servants are enabled to will or to do any good thing, and that Thou only canst prosper the work of their hands ; to Thee, therefore, O LORD, we would ascribe all honour, praise, and thanksgiving, that we have been enabled to accomplish this portion of the work which we have undertaken, and we would rejoice together before Thee and bless Thy Holy Name, beseeching Thee that none of our sins or infirmities may hinder the full outpouring of Thy grace upon us, or on those for whom we have laboured, through the merits of JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

V. O LORD, open Thou our lips ;

R. And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

V. O let our mouths be filled with Thy praise ;

R. That we may sing of Thy glory and honour all the day long.

Then all standing up, shall be sung—

Te Deum Laudamus.

We praise Thee, O GOD, &c.

Then shall the Bishop say—

V. The LORD be with you.

R. And with thy spirit.

Let us pray.

O BLESSED and HOLY TRINITY, Eternal and Everlasting GOD, Who possessest all things, sanctifiest all things, disposest all things ;

to Thy glory we now offer and devote what Thou hast enabled us to accomplish, beseeching Thee with most humble supplication that Thou wouldest condescend to accept the work of our hands, and vouchsafe to send the dew of Thy grace, with the abundance of Thy blessing upon this House and household; bestow on it all good, drive far from it all evil; let Thy holy angels guard it with the defence of Thy hosts; that Thy servants abiding herein as in Thy tabernacle, may be preserved in Thy peace, through Thy great mercies in JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

WE beseech Thee, O LORD, that as Thou hast thus far blessed our efforts and prospered our designs, so Thou wouldest open the hearts of Thy people to give alms for the extension and completion of this House, and for its support day by day, and direct all the desires of our hearts to Thy glory, for the sake of Thy dear SON, JESUS CHRIST our LORD.

O LORD GOD Almighty, by Whose Spirit the whole Body of the Church is governed and sanctified, receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before Thee, for all who are, or may hereafter be, connected with this House, that all in their several vocations and ministries may truly and godly serve Thee; through our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. *Amen.*

REMEMBER, O LORD, for good, the Bishop of this Diocese, our Visitor; the Council, the Founders, and Benefactors; and enrich them with Thy heavenly grace. *Amen.*

REMEMBER, O LORD, the Clergy who shall here minister; grant them to be wise in counsel, and holy in all their service. *Amen.*

REMEMBER, O LORD, the Sisters of this community: endure them with entire devotion, unwearied zeal, and perfect charity. *Amen.*

REMEMBER, O LORD, all who in humbler station shall serve in this community: increase and perfect in them the spirit of faithfulness and love. *Amen.*

REMEMBER, O LORD, the Associates of this House, and prosper all their work with Thy blessing. *Amen.*

REMEMBER, O LORD, the lost sheep of Thy Fold, that are dis-

persed abroad, and grant unto all those who shall be sheltered within these walls, true repentance unto life eternal.

Vouchsafe, O LORD, out of the fulness of Thy gifts, perfect renewal to the sinful, instruction to the ignorant, guidance to the erring, succour to the tempted, comfort to the sorrowful, the spirit of prayer to the lukewarm, to the fearful faith and patience, to those that have begun well continuance in well-doing ; to all, according to their need, more abundant grace, and that they may be found in the number of Thine elect in the last day. *Amen.*

AND to us and to all others who now rejoice in the foundation of this House, and who remember it in their prayers, vouchsafe of Thy mercy, growth and perseverance in the true faith, unwearied hope, unsparing charity, a holy life, a peaceful death, rest in Paradise, a merciful judgment at Thy second coming, and the vision of Thy countenance in Thy perfect glory, for the love of Thy dear SON our SAVIOUR, to Whom, with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, be all praise and thanksgiving, now and ever. *Amen.*

FINALLY, we commend to Thy blessing, O LORD Almighty, all other religious foundations within our borders for the relief of the sick, the orphan, and the outcast, specially those that are more immediately connected with this House. Supply what is wanting in them, and make them effectual instruments of Thy glory. And to Thy whole Church within this land vouchsafe the increase of love, fervour of devotion, the fulness of truth, and the renewal of all the gifts of Thy SPIRIT, that in the communion of all Thy saints, who from the beginning of the world have pleased Thee in their several generations, we may sing praises evermore to Thy glorious Name, O JESUS our SAVIOUR, our LORD and our GOD, in the Unity of the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT, one GOD, world without end. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY GOD, Who hast promised to hear the petitions of those that ask in Thy SON'S Name ; we beseech Thee mercifully to incline Thine ear to us that have made now our prayers and supplications unto Thee, and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to Thy will may be effectually obtained, to the relief of our necessity and to the setting forth of Thy glory, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

The grace of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, &c.

The following Hymn shall then be sung—

CHRIST is made the sure Foundation,
And the precious Corner-stone ;
Who, the twofold walls surmounting,
Binds them closely into one ;
Holy Sion's Help for ever,
And her Confidence alone.

All that dedicated city,
Dearly loved by GOD on high,
In exultant jubilation
Pours perpetual melody ;
GOD the One, and GOD the Trinal,
Singing everlastingly.

To this temple, where we call Thee,
Come, O LORD of Hosts, to-day !
With Thy wonted lovingkindness
Hear Thy people as they pray ;
And Thy fullest benedictions
Shed within its walls for aye.

Here vouchsafe to all Thy servants
That they supplicate to gain ;
Here to have and hold for ever
Those good things their prayers obtain ;
And hereafter in Thy glory,
With Thy blessed ones to reign.

Laud and honour to the FATHER,
Laud and honour to the SON,
Laud and honour to the SPIRIT,
Ever Three and ever One :
Consubstantial, co-eternal,
While unending ages run.

Then follows the administration of the Holy Communion.

The Collect for the day, and also for S. Andrew's Day, shall be said :

STIR up, we beseech Thee, O LORD, the wills of Thy faithful people ; that they plenteously bringing forth the fruits of good

works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded ; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

ALMIGHTY GOD, who didst give such grace to Thy holy Apostle Saint Andrew, that he readily obeyed the calling of Thy SON JESUS CHRIST, and followed Him without delay ; grant unto us all that we, being called by Thy holy Word, may forthwith give up ourselves obediently to fulfil Thy holy commandments ; through the same JESUS CHRIST our LORD. *Amen.*

For the Epistle :—

Rev. xxii. 12.

AND, behold, I come quickly ; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last. Blessed are they that do His commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. I JESUS have sent Mine angel to testify unto you these things in the Churches. I am the Root and the Offspring of David, and the Bright and Morning Star. And the SPIRIT and the Bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely.

For the Gospel :—

S. Luke xv.

THEN drew near unto Him all the publicans and sinners for to hear Him. And the Pharisees and Scribes murmured, saying, This Man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them. And He spake this parable unto them, saying, What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he lose one of them doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after that which is lost, until he find it ? And when he hath found it, he layeth it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he cometh home, he calleth together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me ; for I have found my sheep which was lost. I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth

not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calleth her friends and her neighbours together, saying, Rejoice with me ; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of GOD over one sinner that repenteth.

The Responses, Sanctus, and Gloria in excelsis are sung.

The Service being ended, the Procession returns in the same order in which they entered the Chapel.

As they go, they sing—

Psalm cl. Laudate Dominum.

1 O PRAISE GOD in His holiness : praise Him in the firmament of His power.

2 Praise Him in His noble acts : praise Him according to His excellent greatness.

3 Praise Him in the sound of the trumpet : praise Him upon the lute and harp.

4 Praise Him in the cymbals and dances : praise Him upon the strings and pipe.

5 Praise Him upon the well-tuned cymbals : praise Him upon the loud cymbals.

6 Let every thing that hath breath : praise the LORD.

THE DAY OF THE OPENING OF THE NEW BUILDINGS.

THERE are days in the annals of the Church, which are peculiarly refreshing, as being the seals of blessings already vouchsafed, and the earnestness of future increase. Such was the day of the opening of the New Buildings of the House of Mercy ; a day much to be remembered, whether we consider the large number of persons collected together, the order and impressiveness of the service, or the earnestness and unity of feeling which animated the assembled congregation.

It was a mild, calm day, such as not seldom cheers the close of November. The time appointed for the service was half-past twelve, as most convenient to the many friends of the House at Eton College, and to those who were expected from a distance. Admittance could only be obtained by private invitation, the admission tickets being received at the outer gate. The penitents were kept in their own rooms in the old house, in strict privacy, throughout the day.

On arriving, the company were at once taken into the New Buildings, where they could wander at their will. All the different parts of the building were thrown open to inspection, and most of the rooms furnished for immediate use. The upper story of the north side of the quadrangle being not yet fitted up, and still open along its entire length, served on this day for the chapel. At the east end of this real "upper chamber," was the altar, below which for a considerable space were the seats for the Clergy and Sisters, ranged chancel-wise ; below these again, and up to the further or western extremity, rows of chairs and forms were placed in order fronting the Altar. It had been arranged that the company should take their places in the chapel before the procession approached, or else remain below at certain points out of the line along which it was to pass, and enter the chapel afterwards. It was calculated that not less than five hundred persons, including the Clergy, were gathered

together within the chapel, and about a hundred unable to find room remained below.

The Clergy assembled in the old house. With the Bishop of Oxford there were present the Bishop of Barbadoes, the Archdeacon of Berks, the Provost, Head and Lower Masters, of Eton, and several of the Rural Deans of the Diocese. The choristers and Clergy in their robes formed in procession, walking two and two, the Bishops, and the Clergy supporting them, falling in behind. They first made a circuit through the ground in front of the old house, chanting "Not unto us, O LORD, but unto Thy Name," &c., and thus moved towards the great gates of the New Buildings.

Meanwhile the Warden, and Sub-Warden, the Sisters and the Council, had assembled within the great gateway, the gates remaining closed till the Bishop approached. As soon as the head choristers reached the gates, they and the long line of Clergy following stopped, and turning sideways formed an avenue through which the Bishop moved forward. On his approach the gates were thrown open. The Bishop, crossing the threshold, said the short prayers appointed, the responses being made by the Clergy, Sisters, and Council within. The choir then moved forward and again took the lead of the procession, chanting as they again began to move, "O pray for the peace of Jerusalem, &c." The Council followed the choristers, then the Sisters, the Warden and Sub-Warden, then the Bishops, followed by the long line of Clergy. An eye-witness calculated that there were above one hundred and fifty Clergymen walking in procession. Leaving the gateway they entered the west cloister, and passed across the quadrangle into the east cloister, and thence up the great staircase in the north tower, and entered the chapel, the chant of the choir not ceasing till the Clergy had taken their places. The most striking part of this procession was the moment when the Sisters assumed their place, and the black dresses of their little band were brought into strong contrast with the host of preceding and following surplices. Almost equally striking was the alternate rise and fall,—to those who followed at a distance, or those within the chapel,—of the choristers' voices, as they threaded the cloister, or turned an angle of the building, or wound up the great staircase.

The service was very impressive from the loud and universal response which rose up along the entire chamber. Many especially were struck by the full swell of voices in the Nicene Creed, and the Gloria in Excelsis, which was sung. In the former especially, the

enormous mass of voices condensed, so to speak, in so limited a space, was said by one of the auditors who had been present at many such scenes, both at home and abroad, to be, in its way, the most impressive thing he had ever heard. Of the Bishop's sermon it is needless to speak. A lectern slightly raised had been fixed a short space below the altar, and served as a pulpit.

It was much remarked, that after the prayer for the Church Militant, when ordinarily the non-communicants retire, none seemed to leave the chapel. No move was made, and the crowded chamber continued to be as crowded when the celebration began. It was impossible for the communicants to come up to the altar, and they received in their places. With difficulty the ministering Clergy moved in and out between the rows of the kneeling congregation. Twelve administered, four commencing at the east end, and moving downwards; four at the lower or west end, and moving upwards; and the four others commencing about two-thirds down, met those who moved westward from the altar. The offertory, including a few small sums sent afterwards, and intended to have been offered, amounted to £600.

Service being ended, the choristers moved, chanting the 150th Psalm, "O praise GOD in His holiness," the procession following in the same order in which it entered the chapel, but taking a somewhat different route. Descending the great staircase, instead of passing along the east cloister, they turned to the right, along the passage of the north wing, into the western cloister, and then through the great gates back to the old House, from whence they had started.

A luncheon had been provided in the penitents' dining-rooms, where the company were now gathered together, the Sisters being present and mixing among their friends.

The brief November day was now fast drawing to its close, and by about half-past four or five o'clock, the scene of this deeply interesting ceremonial was left in comparative silence.

The following account, by the kind permission of the Editor, is, with only a few omissions, reprinted from the *Ecclesiologist* for February, 1856 :—

THE NEW BUILDINGS.

“There are curious coincidences in Ecclesiology, as well as in every other science ; and one of them, to those who are acquainted with its locality, will be suggested by the buildings now under our view. It is not a little remarkable that one of the latest and most gorgeous among the edifices of the older English Church, one whose very beauty speaks so painfully of the decline of art, one whose decorations testify to the worldliness, and Erastianism, and corruption of Tudor times, Saint George’s Chapel, should almost look down on a building, one of the earliest firstfruits of the present church revival, plain, simple, unpretending, stern,—bearing evidence, in its very want of decoration, to its design, and yet evincing, by its mastery over inferior materials, and its independence of external ornament, as hopeful a sign for the revived art, as it does for the revived earnestness of the English Church.

“Most of our readers are aware that the House of Mercy, at Clewer, for the reception of penitents, has been carried on, under the patronage of the Bishop of Oxford, by a Sisterhood, since the year 1849. For some time it existed in an ordinary country house, adapted, so far as might be, (but still inconveniently) to its purpose. Surrounding land, to the extent of fifteen acres, having been purchased, the new erection—somewhat to the north of the old house—was commenced in 1854, and, three sides of the quadrangle having been finished, it was opened by the Bishop on the Vigil of Saint Andrew last. We never yet saw a building which gave us the idea of greater pains, and more workmanlike thought having been bestowed on the minutest details, as well as on the general design, than this.

“It is with the three first-named sides of the quadrangle that we

are principally concerned ; and can only criticise the fourth (which it is hoped, may be begun in the spring) from the plans. And first we will give an idea of the whole arrangement.

“The House of Mercy, then, forms a quadrangle, of which the north and south sides are carried considerably beyond the square. The east side is simply a cloister. The north (of three stories, including the dormers) contains,—the dormitories for the penitents,—with rooms for the Sisters in charge intermixed,—the class rooms, the dining-rooms, dairy, &c.,—an oratory, and the temporary chapel. Still to the north is the tower, which carries the great tank and the ventilation shafts. The west side are the kitchen, laundry, and other offices ;—at the south end of this is the principal entrance. These then are finished, and in full work. The south side will contain,—the Sisters’ own rooms (for those, we mean, who are not actually engaged with the penitents,) the “Community room,” the chapel, and to the south of it, and projecting at right angles from the southern façade, the Infirmary. Here are also the rooms for probationers and for penitents of a higher class in society. The whole is of red brick, even to the mullions of the windows, without any stone dressing, or any admixture of black banding or devices. The colour is good, and the masonry, (if such a word may be applied to such a material) is, and more especially in its buttresses, very *telling*. The style is Middle-Pointed, with perhaps no further deviations from precedent than the necessity of the case may justify : and, as a general rule, the windows of the rooms occupied by the Sisters are foliated ; those for the penitents without foliation.

“We will now suppose ourselves to be entering at the great door : and to be going round the building from south to north.

“The space intervening between the outer door, in the boundary wall, and that of the building itself, is covered in with a solid, flat, slated and timbered roof. On entering the building itself—(the great doors are very well treated and effective,) to the right are two small rooms, one of which is the porteress’s lodge ; above these are the temporary bedrooms for the probationers, and the Sister in charge of them. Turning to the left, we enter the western cloister. This is a lean-to, lighted from the east by a succession of windows in wooden frames, of the shape of a truncated pyramid, opening back from the bottom, and regulated by balance-weights. These large apertures are necessary for the sake of ventilation,—all the offices, of whatever description, opening into this passage. These offices themselves are lighted by very large dormer windows, each

containing eight square-headed lights, arranged five and three. The apex of the roof on this side is surmounted by a long, narrow, flat-tish, second roof; the sides being open with luffer boards, much after the fashion of the upper stage of a paper-mill. From the western cloister, and to the left hand, we first enter the *ironing-room*, attached to which is a shuttered aperture for sending the clothes out. (It may be proper here to notice that washing forms a considerable part of the penitents' work; and the necessary communications with the exterior are so managed, as to render any prohibited intercourse next to impossible. Hence the shuttered window instead of the door.) Still going on, we have next to the left the *wash-house*; this communicates with another shuttered aperture for taking the linen in, and so joins the fire-room. Next comes the kitchen, lighted by a lofty, octagonal, luffered lantern, of excellent timber work, which externally is one of the most picturesque parts of the building. It is to be observed that all these various departments can be (and at night are) completely shut off from each other; an arrangement which is found essential to the preservation of due order and subordination. This western cloister opens into the quadrangle: though a lean-to, as we have said, the principals are distinguished by a very elegant, and somewhat solid-looking trefoiled brace; an arrangement which forms an excellent perspective effect. Through a private door and shuttered apertures, at the north-east end, the stores are taken in; here also is the larder, and the room for the Sister in charge of the kitchen, &c.

We now enter the north side. Here there is no cloister, but a passage running along the whole: the dairy and two dining-rooms, intended for penitents, one of which for the present is occupied by the Sisters, until their own rooms can be erected. At the north-east end of the quadrangle is a room, excellently contrived, for cloaks and bonnets. It is open on two sides, with a double row of banisters, so as to permit free ventilation. To the west of this is the penitents' dining-room, with two tables, and a desk, for reading at meal-times. If we turn to the east, from the same north-east end, we shall first,—to our right have a class-room for penitents, for the present used as the Sisters' community-room, large, cheerful, and very real: a south window of three lights, sofa and piano, the walls hung with pictures, &c. We may observe that all the fire-places are managed much in the same way, and excellently: stone is here, almost alone, employed: the mantel-piece is, as it were, cut into two portions by the insertion of a sunk panel, baring a coloured tile. To the east of

this, is the Assistant Superior's room, with a window of two trefoil-headed lights; and yet further to the east, and forming the end of the north wing, is a very large class-room, well-lighted both from the east and from the south. There would be good room in this for forty penitents, commanded by the Sister's desk at the upper end of the apartment.

We ascend by the staircase which is in the great tower, and may therefore describe that first. Externally, it is very massy and bold, with overhanging eaves, and a pyramidal head, truncated near the top and surmounted by a small lantern, also pyramidally capped. Internally, it has an immense brick shaft, encircled with the ventilating apparatus, and the tank. Round this the staircase winds: the bath-room opens off from it, and the same fire that regulates the supply of air, does duty also in heating the water.

We now ascend to the upper passage of the northern wing. Here are the dormitories. Some of the penitents' rooms have four beds, some only one; the rooms of the sisters are interspersed between them, and by small windows command them. At intervals are breaks in the chain of rooms, occupied by large tables, on which the clothes are given out, and also serving for various uses. At the end of this passage, and therefore over the large class room, is a small oratory. The east window is an unequal triplet, the central light being the lowest, with a plain circle in the head. This oratory serves for use of those Sisters who are in actual charge of the north wing, and also with permission, as a place of retirement and private prayer for the penitents; within and opening out of the oratory is a small room which is for the use of the Sisters in their private teaching. The third story, which is in the roof, is calculated for more penitents, and contains at the east end the temporary chapel. This calls for no particular notice; it is as well arranged as circumstances will admit; the altar is properly vested. Owing to a necessity in the shape of the apartments the Sisters at present sit nearest the altar, the Superior and Assistant-Superior alone occupy their proper places. This will be rectified in the true chapel. This eastern gable is sufficiently striking from the exterior, the lower story, with the two two-light windows of the class-room, flanked by angular buttresses of two stages, and with a central buttress of one; above the latter is a slightly projecting oriel, (the east end of the oratory) which runs up pyramidally, and terminates in a brick cross; on each side of this is a window, (those which form the east end of the temporary chapel.)

"We now come to the east side, which consists of a simple cloister; it contains nine bays, the central one being taken up with the entrance, on the one side into the quadrangle, on the other into the garden. On each side of this to the east are four windows of four lights each, acutely-pointed trefoils, with interjacent buttresses of two stages. This, seen from the garden, is an excellent specimen of what may be done with simple red brick, where there is no actual size to give grandeur to separate details. On the interior, towards the quadrangle, each bay has a single light, and an arch of construction, which excellently relieves what might else be a monotonous space. The tiling of this cloister is very good, the walls illuminated with legends; that for example over the door into the north wing, 'Him that cometh unto Me,' &c.

"The southern wing, as we have said, is not yet begun, and we can only judge of it from the plans. The chapel occupies its eastern portion, and projects far beyond the east cloister. This, very properly, is of a character far more ornate than the rest of the building. The east window, of three divisions, the two side ones of two trefoiled lights, the centre one of a single trefoiled light, carries two and one quatrefoiled circles in the head; on the south side, to the eastward of the projecting infirmary, we have two adjacent windows of two trefoiled lights each. The bell turret is on the north side. All this is very pretty; so also is the rest of the wing, which however we would rather not criticise from the drawings, because before many months we hope to have the opportunity of noticing the original.

"Our readers will see that—apart from any religious view—we consider the House of Mercy a work of high art. We do so on several distinct grounds: the novelty—so far as ancient precedent is concerned—of the idea; the nature of many of the details—(*difficile est proprie communia dicere*—and if to *write*, certainly to *build*), and the character of the materials employed. We trust that before many months have elapsed we shall be called to notice the final completion of the erection; and in the meantime wishing the work most heartily God speed, we will conclude by expressing our hopes that its past success may be an earnest—and we could scarcely wish more—of its future progress."

A P P E A L.

WE greatly need help without delay to enable us to clear off the liabilities still remaining on the New Buildings, which must be met by May next ; and also to complete our designs. We ask of those who are enabled and kindly disposed to aid us, that they would aid us now by giving or collecting *in the course of the next six months the sum of £10.* If *three hundred and fifty persons* undertake to give this aid we should hope to be clear of existing liabilities, and to complete what we have begun.

We are earnestly desirous to complete our designs without delay, for many reasons. The pressure for the admission of penitents is so great, that we have constantly the pain of rejecting urgent cases. One crying want especially, which has never anywhere as yet been supplied,—a separate department for penitents of a higher grade cannot be met till the remaining wing is built. The completion of the Sisters' rooms is also very urgent ; for at present they are occupying those intended for the penitents, and both their efficiency is marred, and the privacy which they need when not actually at work, is unattainable for want of the rooms intended for them.

We trust, then, for the love of souls, that this our appeal will not be rejected ; and that in the same spirit in which the work is being carried on, those who can help us will join us in an association of prayer and alms for a time, till the work be accomplished.

Any who are kindly drawn to unite in making this effort for us in our hour of need, will be thankfully supplied with any number of papers they may require, to assist in forwarding this object, by applying to the undersigned,

THOMAS T. CARTER.

Clewer Rectory, Windsor.

Lent, 1856.

